DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 342 JC 860 502

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TITLE The Survey as a Part of Strategic Planning.
PUB DATE 3 Oct 86
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Academic Library Association of Ohio (Columbus, OH, October 3, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Libraries; College Planning; Community Colleges; *Learning Resources Centers; Library Research; Library Services; Library Surveys; Questionnaires; Student Attitudes; Technical Institutes; Two Year Colleges; *User Satisfaction (Information); Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Cincinnati Technical College OH

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Cincinnati Technical College (CTC) to determine why students were underutilizing the Learning Resource Center (LRC), as well as to assess the opinions of students who did use the collection and services of the LRC. Telephone surveys were conducted by LRC staff members with 142 of 360 randomly selected students in the study population. Study findings included the following: (1) 64.8% of the respondents had used the LRC during the preceding two terms, with the highest usage among Health majors; (2) the LRC was used most frequently as a place to study; (3) 44.6% of the respondents used reference materials, 38% used a photocopier, and 37% checked out books for class; (4) only 3.5% reported dissatisfaction with the materials available; and (5) 78% of the nonusers said the reason they did not use the LRC was that class assignments did not require it. The interview schedule is attached. (LAL)

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ED273342

The Survey as a Part of Strategic Planning

by Debbie Tucker

Presented at the 1986 Annual Conference
of the Academic Library Association of Ohio:
Strategic Planning: Today's Library Tomorrow

Friday, October 3, 1986
Holiday Inn on the Lane
Columbus, Ohio

IC 860 502

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We all have preconceived notions about our collections, and about our users and non-users. When we are strategically planning for the future, it becomes important to see how these preconceptions correspond with reality. We can then base our plans on demonstrable facts, rather than opinions. One way of learning of our library's strengths and weaknesses, as perceived by our users, is through a survey, such as the one recently undertaken at the Learning Resource Center of Cincinnati Technical College.

CTC is a two-year, state-supported institution, with approximately 4000 commuting full-time and part-time students. Cooperative education is an integral component of most curriculums at CTC. In any term, more than half of the enrolled students will be attending classes on campus, but a significant percentage will be placed in off-campus coop jobs. The major academic divisions are Business Technologies, Engineering Technologies, Health Technologies, Math and Physical Sciences, and Communication Skills and Social Sciences. The college offers five ten-week terms per year.

When students check out books, they give their names and technologies. We knew from this that the students of some divisions are the most frequent users, while the students of other divisions are less frequently seen. We had some ideas as to why this was the case, and wanted to have our ideas confirmed or negated.

I had no prior experience with surveys. In preparation, I attended a two-day continuing education course in Survey Research Methods, presented by Gary Golden of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium. Dr. Terry Glenn, Senior Assistant to the President for Administrative Services at CTC also provided invaluable advise and assistance.

Since we were interested in why students did not use the LRC, as well as

the opinions of the students who did use the collection and the services, we had to go outside the LRC to conduct the survey. While a survey that would be offered to all patrons in the LRC would have been much easier to conduct, we did not feel it would provide the answers we wanted. We determined that a telephone survey of randomly selected students would have the greatest statistical validity. We did, however, want to insure proportional representation of the various divisions. We asked the staff of the Management Information Systems at CTC to generate a list of 360 students, stratisfied by division. We trusted random sampling to achieve appropriate proportions of students in class or on coop jobs, and a proper male/female mix. The demographic breakdown of the sample was: **(illustrations 2 and 3)**

M/S/CS/SS	2.1%	Male	50.7%	Class	81.7%
Health	15.5	Female	46.5	Co-op	12.
Engineering	18.3	Unknown	2.8	Class/Co-op	6.3
Business	44.4				
Non-Major	19.7				

This breakdown corresponds satisfactorily with the student population of the college. The computer printout provided by MIS **(illustration 4)** included name, department, telephone number, sex, and class/coop status. The division, sex, and class/coop status would be the first items of information recorded on the survey sheet. **(illustration 5)** Since this information was already available, we did not have to ask these questions.

The first piece of information we wanted to know from the students was whether or not they had used the LRC during the past two terms. **(also illustration 5)** This time length was selected because of the number of

students involved in cooperative education: students who were working at coop jobs would not be as likely to use the LRC as those in classes at the time. Students would rarely coop two terms in a row. For the next section of the survey, one set of questions were devised for the users, and a second for the non-users. Users were asked their reasons for using the LRC. **(illustration 6)** We then wanted to know the satisfaction level, first with materials, and then with services. **(illustration 7)** Non-users were asked to give their reasons for not using the LRC. **(illustration 8)** Finally, users and non-users alike were asked if they were aware of reciprocal borrowing priviledges available through the Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium, and if so, which of the other GCLC libraries they had used. **(illustration 9)**

The decision to conduct the survey over the telephone, with LRC staff members as the interviewers, gave flexibility in the design of the survey questionnaire itself. Instructions to the interviewer, such as "If 'yes', proceed with question 5. If 'no', skip to question 20," could be used freely. **(illustration 10)** Since we knew we would be utilizing the computer to help us analyze the results, the questions and possible answers were all assigned numeric values. (Usually 1 for yes, 2 for no, 6 for no answer, and 9 to indicate a question not asked of that subject in response to a "Skip to question x" command.) **(illustration 11)** Training sessions were held in-house, in small groups, with pairs of employees role-playing interviewer and student. Nine staff members (from the Director through part-time employees) assisted in the survey, and each was given a section of the computer printout. We knew we'd have a hard time reaching our students, due to class and work schedules. Late afternoon calls were attempted with almost no results. Telephone calls were usually placed between 7 and 9 in the evening. We occasionally traded lists, in the hopes that people habitually

not home on Mondays would be home on Tuesdays, and vice versa. Some nights the most frequent voice heard was the operator, "The number you have reached is no longer in service." In all, we surveyed 142 students.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), available on our DEC mainframe, was used to analysze the data. As I've already indicated, we had coded the questionnaire for numeric responses. Vicki Candella and Diane Schrand of CTC"s Management Information Service were most helpful in setting up the program and running it. I entered the data in the file they created **(illustration 12)**, a process that took less than an hour. The results were on my desk in less than a week.

So, what did we learn? Overall, 64.8% of the population surveyed had used the LRC during the past two terms. Broken down by division, usage was **(illustration 13)**

Health	81.8%
Business	63.5
Engineering	57.7
M/S/CS/SS	33.3

This breakdown in usage in was agreement with the preconceptions with which we began. 64.3% of non-majors (those students taking an occasional course without being part of a degree program) reported having used the LRC within the past two terms. Most frequest use of the LRC was "to study", with 71.7% of the users reporting this. 44.6% reported using reference materials, 41.3% used periodicals, 38% used a photocopier, and 37% checked out books for class assignments. Only 17.4% checked out books for pleasure reading, and 12% reported having used a media program. **(illustration 14)**

Satisfaction level was very high, with only 3.5% of the survey population reporting some dissatisfaction with the materials available. In all cases,

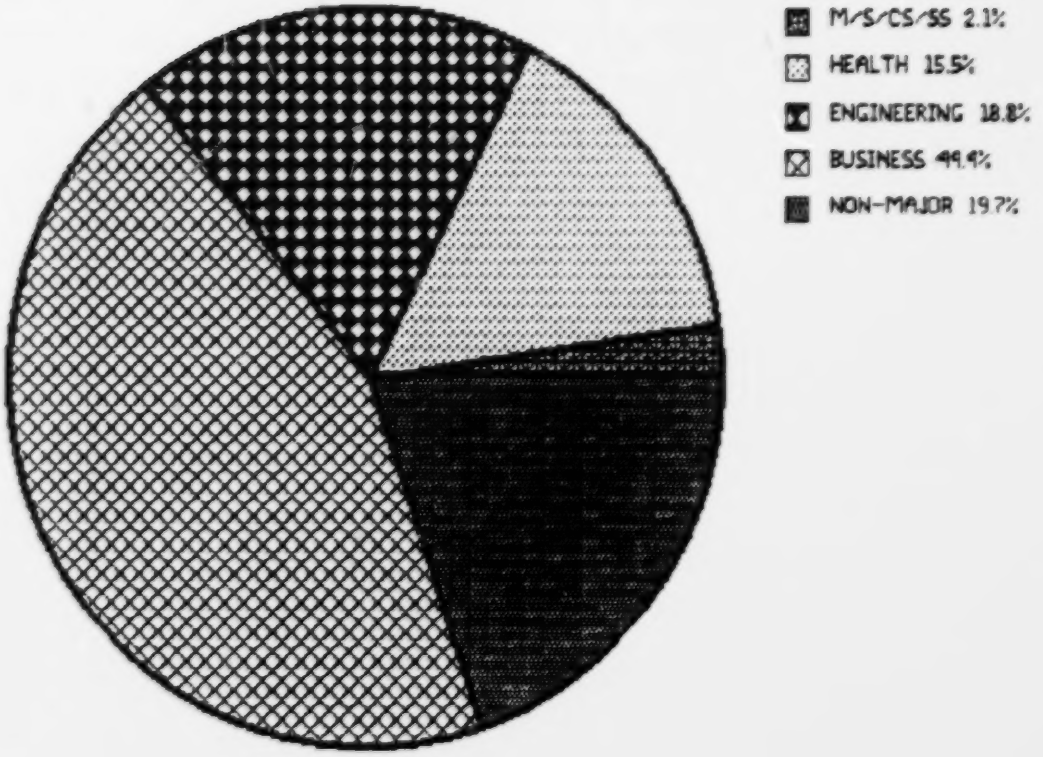
this was because of insufficient holdings in the students' areas, with both books and journals cited as needed. All reports of dissatisfaction came from Health and Business Technology students. No one reported dissatisfaction with the services offered.

The most commonly reported reason for not using the library was that "class assignments do not require use of the LRC", with 78% of the non-users surveyed giving this response. **(illustration 15)** 18% of the non-users preferred to use another library, and 12.2% of them found the current LRC hours unsuitable to their schedules.

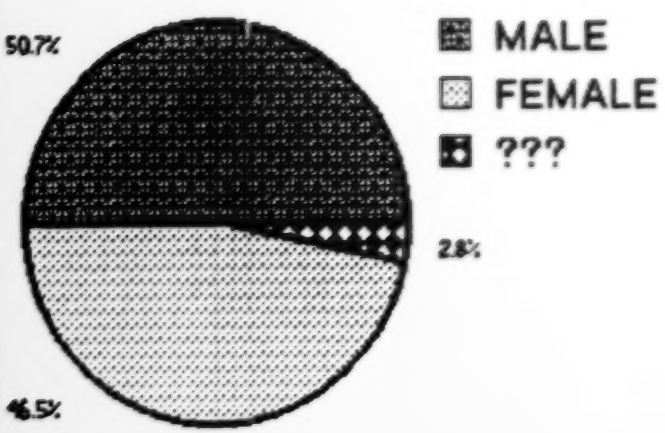
The results of the survey did not give us a strong mandate for change. Usage by division was pretty much what we had expected it to be. The primary reason for non-use of the LRC (lack of class assignments requiring it) is the one we suspected would be the main reason given, and this excuse was given by non-users of all divisions. **(illustration 16)** It is also the one over which we have the least control. Had we found that students were avoiding the LRC because we lacked the materials that they needed, or because the materials we did have were too old, or too complex, or too simplistic, or whatever, we could have taken steps to remedy their complaints. We were glad to see that users' perceptions of the LRC were not what have keeping them from using the collection. But, on the other hand, had they complained loudly about the lack of materials, this would have provided a strong argument in favor of increased funding.

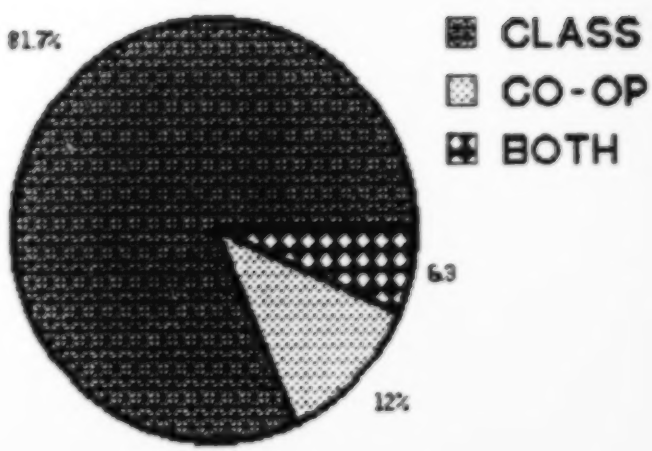
For the most part, our survey confirmed our opinions, rather than revealing attitudes that were previously unknown to us. We do now, however, have a factual basis for these beliefs.

Demographics



Demographics





STUDENT LISTING FOR LRC SURVEY 03-Mar-86

NAME	DEPT	PHONE NO.	SEX	CLASS	COOP
BEST, WAYNE D	ENG	5816493	M	X	
SHELLEY, RICHARD A.	ENG	5135317430	M	X	
HARTIG, MIKE	ENG	5747259	M	X	
LEHRTER, MICHAEL W	ENG	5133679089	M	X	X
BROSS, BRIAN	ENG	9315349	M	X	
WITTKAMP, CHRIS A	ENG	5134716303	M	X	
BATH, GARY L.	ENG	8911695	M		X
JEFFRIES, JAMES L.	ENG	5132711352	M	X	
ELCHO, JOHN J	ENG	3217047	M		X
DIRR, WAYNE A	ENG	5135741045	M		X
LOCKE, GREGORY A.	ENG	5135220627	M	X	
RUMSEY, STEVEN J	ENG	5136830808	M		X
NAGEL, AMY MADELINE	ENG	5638659	F	X	
STAPLETON, JEFFREY G.	ENG	5138517585	M	X	
LAMEY, ROBERT W.	ENG	5136622041	M	X	
RITTER, EUGENE ALAN	ENG	8129345884	M	X	X
HOERLEIN, JOHN P	ENG	5139214769	M	X	
LILLY, ROBERT	ENG	3853350	M	X	
BUSCHLE, JEROME R	ENG	5134711883	M	X	
BARR, MICHAEL W	ENG	7335944	M	X	X
FULTZ, ANTHONY W.	ENG	5137777885	M	X	X
STRACK, JOSEPH L	ENG	5134710855	M	X	
FELDMAN, MARK	ENG	5211973	M	X	
STEVENS, KENNETH D	BUS	5135750432	M	X	
ELDRIDGE, MARY L	BUS	3533392	F	X	
ROTH, MARY A	BUS	5135411164	F	X	
JERRELS, RICKEY EDWARD	BUS	9611445	M	X	

Scotch
584 Transparency Mounting Frame
D.C. Part No. 0-21200-19919

Commercial Tape Division/3M
St. Paul, MN 55144 Made in U.S.A.

1. Division
   ___ M/S/CS/SS (1-1) ___ Health (1-2) ___ Engineering (1-3) ___ Business (1-4) ___ Non-Major (1-5)
2. ___ Male (2-1) ___ Female (2-2) ___ Unknown (2-3)
3. ___ Class (3-1) ___ Co-op (3-2) ___ Class/Co-op (3-3)

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from the Learning Resource Center, or Library, at Cincinnati Technical College. Could you spare a few minutes of your time to answer some questions for me?

4. Have you used the Learning Resource Center at Cincinnati Technical College during the past two terms?

   _____ (4-1) yes (If "yes", proceed with question 5.)

   _____ (4-2) no (If "no", skip to question 20.)

no.
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Scotch
EBA Transparent Magnetic Tape

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584 Transparency Mounting Frame
Commercial Tape Division/3M

5. For what purpose did you use the LRC? Please respond "yes" to all that apply.

YES	NO		No answer	Not asked
5-1	5-2	to check out a book for a class assignment	5-6	5-9
6-1	6-2	to check out a book for pleasure reading	6-6	6-9
7-1	7-2	to use reference materials	7-6	7-9
8-1	8-2	to use periodicals and/or indexes	8-6	8-9
9-1	9-2	to use a media program	9-6	9-9
10-1	10-2	to use materials instructor placed on reserve	10-6	10-9
11-1	11-2	to use photocopy machine	11-6	11-9
12-1	12-2	to study	12-6	12-9
13-1	13-2	to use videotaping facility	13-6	13-9
14-1	14-2	to receive instruction in the use of the LRC	14-6	14-9
15-1	15-2	other. Please specify.	15-6	15-9 .

Interviewer, please record all responses.

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16. How satisfied were you with the materials you used in the LRC?

____ very satisfied
16-1

____ somewhat satisfied
16-2

____ neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
16-3

____ somewhat dissatisfied
16-4

____ very dissatisfied
16-5

Interviewer, if patron was somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please ask this question:

Why were you dissatisfied? Interviewer, please record all reasons given.

___ 17-1 response
___ 17-6 no response
___ 17-9 not asked

17. How satisfied were you with the service you received in the LRC?

____ very satisfied

____ somewhat satisfied

____ neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

____ somewhat dissatisfied

____ very dissatisfied

Interviewer, if patron was somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please ask this question:

Why were you dissatisfied? Interviewer, please record all reasons given.

___ 19-1 response
___ 19-6 no response
___ 19-9 not asked

Interviewer, skip to question 26.

20. Why did you not use the Learning Resource Center during the past two terms? Please respond "yes" to all that apply.

YES (20-1)	NO (20-2)		No response (20-6)	Not asked (20-9)
____	____	class assignments did not require use of the LRC	____	____
____	____	prefer to use public library/other library	____	____
____	____	LRC hours are not suitable to my schedule	____	____
~~____~~	~~____~~	other. Please specify.	____	____

Interviewer, please record all answers.

24-1 response
24-6 no response
24-9 not asked

Interviewer, if yes to "LRC hours are not suitable..." ask this question:

What hours would better serve your needs?_____

25-1 response
25-6 no response
25-9 not asked

no.
Commercial Tape Division/3M
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Commercial Tape Division/3M

no.

26. Do you know that you can use other area libraries through the Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium?

_____ yes
26-1

_____ no
26-2

___ 26-6 no response
___ 26-9 not asked

If yes, continue. If no, "Thank you for your time in answering these questions.

27. Have you used any other GCLC libraries?

_____ yes
27-1

_____ no
27-2

___ 27-6 no response
___ 27-9 not asked

If yes, continue. If no, "Thank you for your time in answering these questions.

28. Which other libraries have you used? Interviewer, please record all.

___ 28-1 response
___ 28-6 no response
___ 28-9 not asked

29. Do you feel that membership in GCLC benefits CTC students?

_____ yes
29-1

_____ no
29-2

___ 29-6 no response
___ 29-9 not asked

Thank you for your time in answering these questions.

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no.

1. Division
   ___ M/S/CS/SS (1-1) ___ Health (1-2) ___ Engineering (1-3) ___ Business (1-4) ___ Non-Major (1-5)
2. ___ Male (2-1) ___ Female (2-2) ___ Unknown (2-3)
3. ___ Class (3-1) ___ Co-op (3-2) ___ Class/Co-op (3-3)

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from the Learning Resource Center, or Library, at Cincinnati Technical College. Could you spare a few minutes of your time to answer some questions for me?

4. Have you used the Learning Resource Center at Cincinnati Technical College during the past two terms?

   _____ yes (4-1) (If "yes", proceed with question 5.)

   _____ no (4-2) (If "no", skip to question 20.)

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no.

5. For what purpose did you use the LRC? Please respond "yes" to all that apply.

YES	NO		No answer	Not asked
5-1	5-2	to check out a book for a class assignment	5-6	5-9
6-1	6-2	to check out a book for pleasure reading	6-6	6-9
7-1	7-2	to use reference materials	7-6	7-9
8-1	8-2	to use periodicals and/or indexes	8-6	8-9
9-1	9-2	to use a media program	9-6	9-9
10-1	10-2	to use materials instructor placed on reserve	10-6	10-9
11-1	11-2	to use photocopy machine	11-6	11-9
12-1	12-2	to study	12-6	12-9
13-1	13-2	to use videotaping facility	13-6	13-9
14-1	14-2	to receive instruction in the use of the LRC	14-6	14-9
15-1	15-2	other. Please specify.	15-6	15-9

Interviewer, please record all responses.

4221111222112221919999911111
4111222222212221919999992999
4112999999999909091222299?
4122999999999909091222299?
4211212222212221919999992999
4221112222212222929999992999
3112999999999909092221299?
3111122222112222929999912??
3111222222212211919999999?
5211222212212221919999992999
4211111222112121919999912??
5331222222210223939999929??
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3122999999999909091222299?
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4111221122222229199999111?
4111121122122221919999992999
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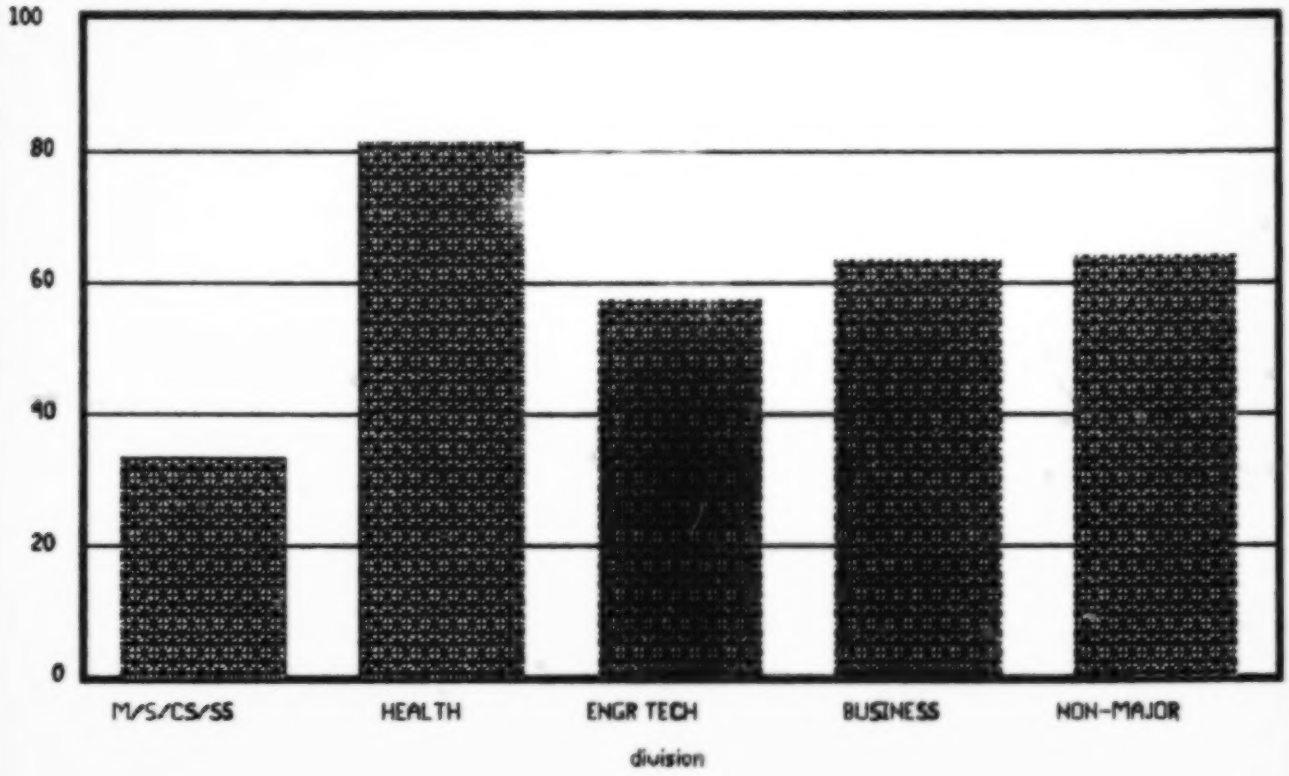
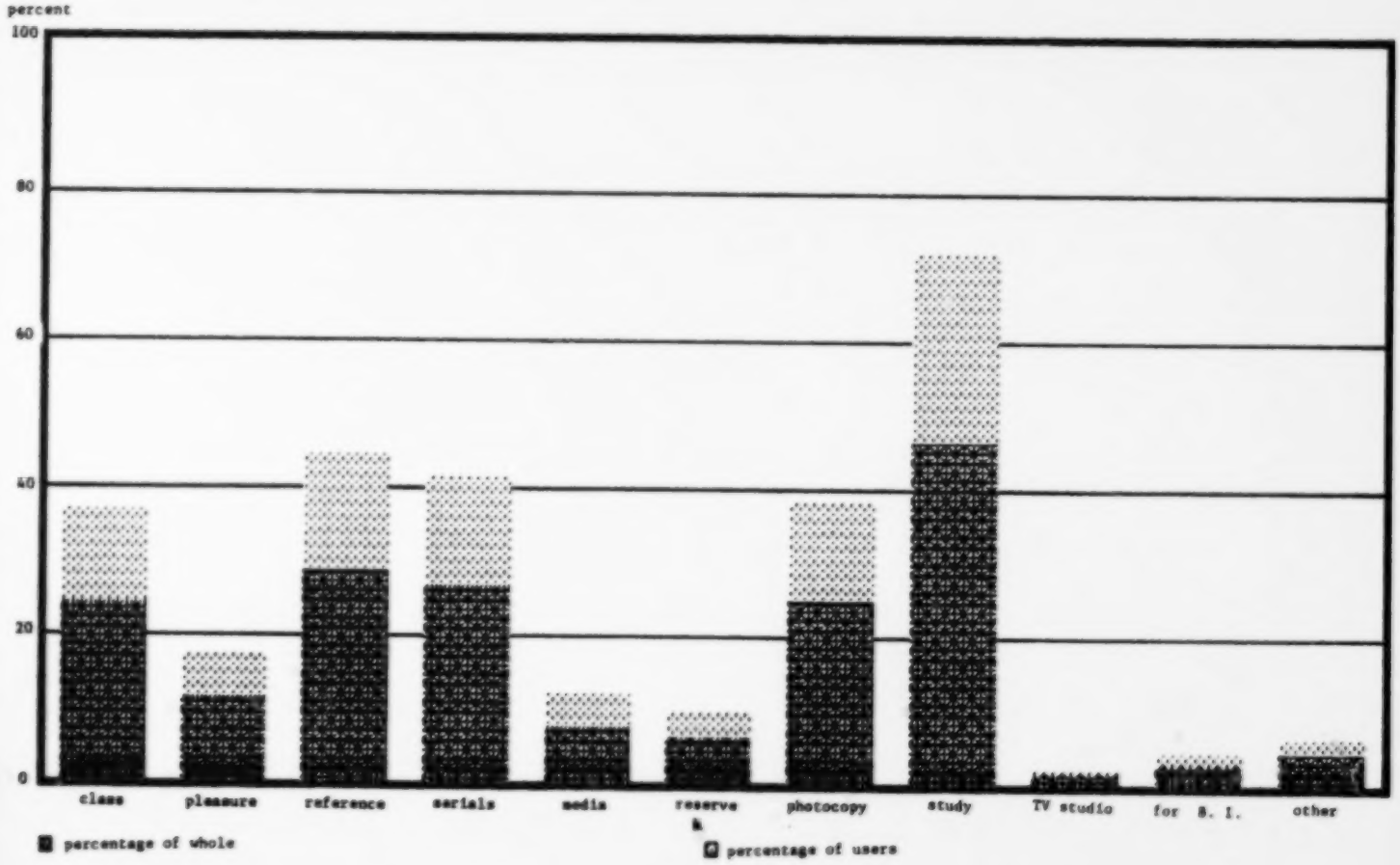
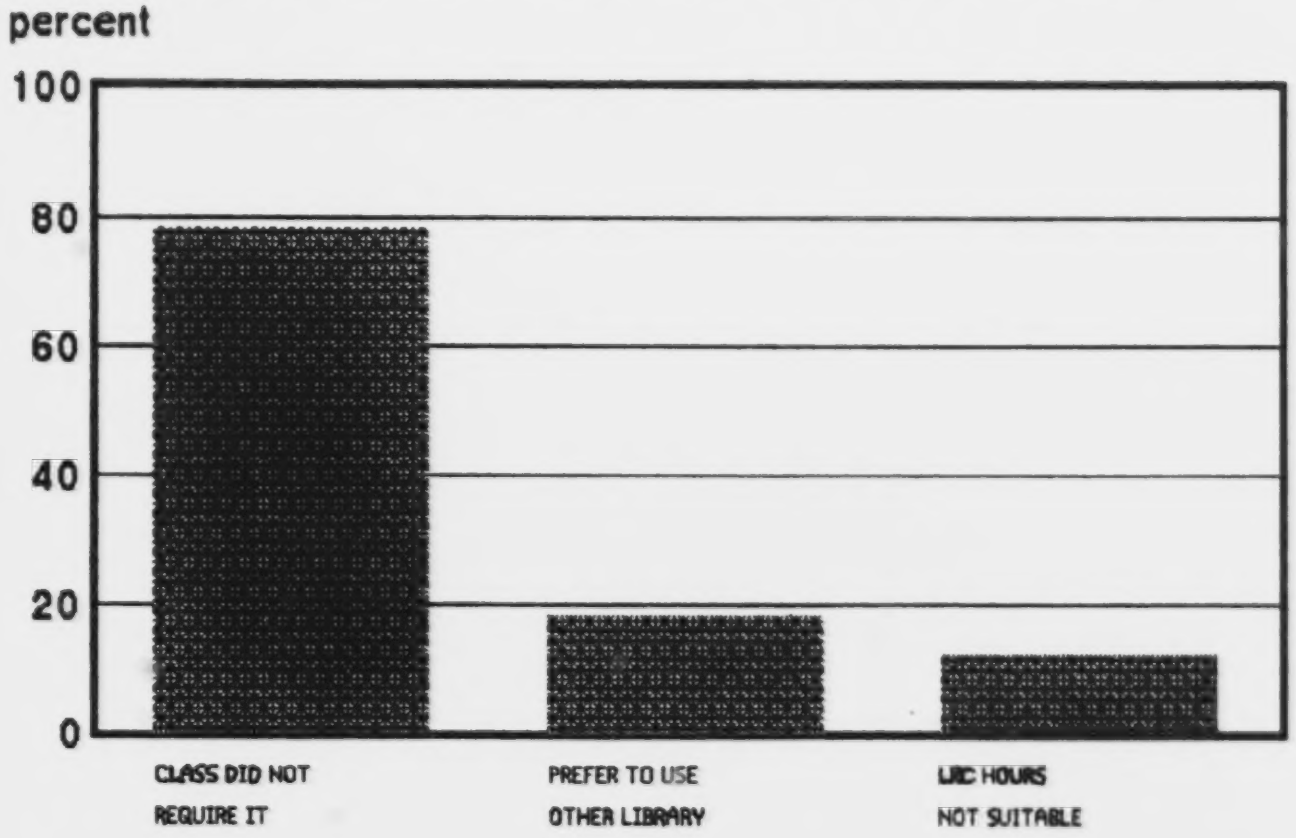
Usage of the LRC during the past 2 terms



Used the LRC for what purpose?



Reasons for NOT using LRC in the past 2 terms



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Did not use LRC because class did not require it.